

West of the U.S. NUK-77-1918Dear Mr. Chairman: BY SKF NARS, DATE 5/23/78

It has been some time since I have used this channel to set forth my thoughts to you; but, as we have both earlier agreed, it is important from time to time that we be in direct communication to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding in our efforts for peaceful agreements.

One current area of misunderstanding relates to the negotiations for a nuclear test ban. I am confident that Ambassador Dean and Dr. Wiesner are reporting to me correctly that no one on our side ever indicated a readiness to accept the number of inspections proposed in your letter of December 19. Certainly that has never been the position of this government. On the other hand, I have respect for your representatives, and have concluded, therefore, that an honest misunderstanding has somehow occurred. We are not trying to be arbitrary on this matter, or impose our views on anyone; for we deeply believe that an agreement to end nuclear testing is in the best interest of both our countries and in the interest of peace. Prime Minister Macmillan and I hope to have new ~~suggest~~ suggestions on this matter very soon.

This government remains very much opposed to the spread of nuclear weapons to additional nations; and the very purpose of our multilateral nuclear force proposals is to discourage the growth of national nuclear capabilities in West Germany and other Western countries. I shall not reply here to Mr. Gromyko's formal charges on this matter -- I simply want you to have my personal assurance that we have no intention of giving any other nation the unrestricted right to use our nuclear capabilities without our consent.

We shall continue to seek the best views of preventing the spread of national nuclear forces, and would be relieved if you could obtain the participation of China in your own bilateral nuclear force which could be used only with your consent. Indeed, that would relieve all the world.

The situation in Cuba continues to be of concern to those who care about peace in the Caribbean. Although the recent withdrawal of troops has been important -- and no one in this administration / has been permitted to regard this as a victory or cause for gloating -- the continued presence of Soviet forces and arms will never be regarded with equanimity by the people of this Hemisphere. For myself, I still do not wish to be forced into any military action in Cuba or anywhere else; but inasmuch as our peaceful observation of the island proved last fall to be essential to safeguarding our security and the security of others, that observation will continue; and any interference with it would evoke whatever response was necessary to retain it. While the attitude of the present regime in Cuba and its persistent attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of other Hemispheric nations requires certain counter-measures, we are aware of the tensions unduly created by these private attacks on your ships in Caribbean waters; and we are taking action to halt those attacks which are in violation of our laws, and ^{obtaining} ~~ensuring~~ the support of the British Government in preventing the use of their Caribbean islands for this purpose.

Laos appears dangerous again. Surely neither one of us wants a breakdown of last year's agreement or a direct test of force in that country.

I trust you will again use your influence to restrain the one side which appears most provocative in this case, and our further proposals will be transmitted directly to you.

These are but a few of the problems now before or between our nations;
two ~~countries~~ and I wonder whether it would be helpful for me to send to the Soviet Union sometime in May a senior personal representative to discuss these matters informally with you. The object would not be formal negotiations, but a fully frank, informal exchange of views, arranged in such a way as to receive as little attention as possible. If this thought is appealing to you, please let me know your views on the most convenient time.

In closing, I want again to send my warmest personal wishes to you and all your family. These are difficult and dangerous times in which we live, and both you and I have grave responsibilities to our families and to all of mankind. The pressures from those who have a less patient and peaceful outlook are very great -- but I assure you of my own determination to work at all times to strengthen world peace.

Sincerely,